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ABSTRACT

This indicator highlights findings about Internet access in schools. From 1994-98, Internet access and the percentage of instructional rooms with Internet access in public schools increased. Public schools with a high student poverty level were less likely to have Internet access than schools with a low poverty level from 1994-97. In fall 1998, high poverty-level public schools were as likely to have Internet access as low poverty-level schools. In fall 1997, public schools with a high minority enrollment had a lower rate of Internet access and a smaller percentage of instructional rooms with Internet access than schools with a low minority enrollment. By fall 1998, this gap closed, but high minority enrollment schools were still less likely to have instructional rooms with Internet access. In both public and private schools with Internet access, teachers were more likely to have access to e-mail, news groups, resource location services, and the World Wide Web than students. Tables and graphs present data on: (1) percentage of public schools and instructional rooms with Internet access by school characteristics, 1994-98; (2) percentage of public schools and instructional rooms with Internet access, 1994-98; and (3) percentage of public schools and instructional rooms with Internet access by percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, 1998. (MES)

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INDICATOR OF THE MONTH

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

Internet access in public and private schools

November 1999

The Internet, with its vast array of information, can broaden the learning resources available in schools by providing teachers and students with connections to libraries, schools, and government agencies. Information found on the Internet can broaden students' knowledge base, and Internet access can prepare students for an increasingly technological workplace. Examining patterns of Internet access in schools can help determine how many students will be prepared to use this technology effectively in the future.

- Between fall 1994 and fall 1998, Internet access in public schools increased from 35 to 89 percent of schools. The percentage of public school instructional rooms with Internet access also increased during this time period (from 3 percent in 1994 to 51 percent in 1998).
- Public schools with a high student poverty level (71 percent or more of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch) were less likely to have Internet access than schools with a low student poverty level (less than 11 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch) from fall 1994 to 1997. However, in fall 1998, high poverty-level public schools were as likely to have Internet access as low poverty-level schools.
- In fall 1997, public schools with a high minority enrollment (50 percent or more) had a lower rate of Internet access than public schools with a low minority enrollment (less than 6 percent), and had a smaller percentage of instructional rooms with Internet access than public schools with a low minority enrollment. By fall 1998, the gap between high and low minority enrollment schools with Internet access closed, but high minority enrollment schools were still less likely to have instructional rooms with Internet access.
- In both public and private schools with Internet access, teachers were more likely to have access to e-mail, news groups, resource location services, and the World Wide Web than were students in these schools.

Percentage of public schools and instructional rooms with Internet access, by school characteristics: Fall 1994–98

School characteristics	Percentage of schools with Internet access					Percentage of instructional rooms with Internet access[1]				
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Total	**35**	**50**	**65**	**78**	**89**	**3**	**8**	**14**	**27**	**51**
Level of school[2]										
Elementary	30	46	61	75	88	3	8	13	24	51
Secondary	49	65	77	89	94	4	8	16	32	52
Percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch										
Less than 11	40	62	78	88	87	4	9	18	36	62
11–30	39	59	72	83	94	4	10	16	32	53
31–70	33	47	58	78	91	3	7	14	27	52
71 or more	19	31	53	63	80	2	3	7	14	39
Percentage of minority students enrolled										
Less than 6	38	52	65	84	91	6	9	18	37	57
6–20	38	58	72	87	93	4	10	18	35	59
21–49	38	54	65	73	91	4	9	12	22	52
50 or more	27	40	56	63	82	3	3	5	13	37

[1] Based on the total number of instructional rooms in regular public schools.

[2] Data for combined schools are not reported as a separate level of school because there are too few sample observations for a reliable estimate. Included in the totals are data for combined schools.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, "Internet Access in Public Schools," Issue Brief, February 1998, and "Internet Access in Public Schools, 1994–1998," Issue Brief, February 1999.

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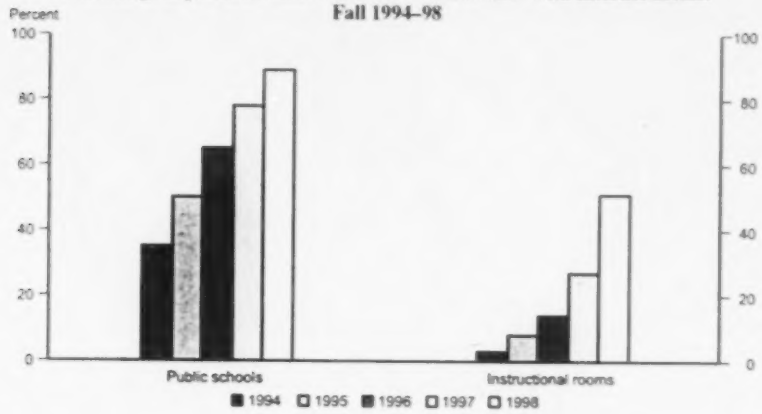
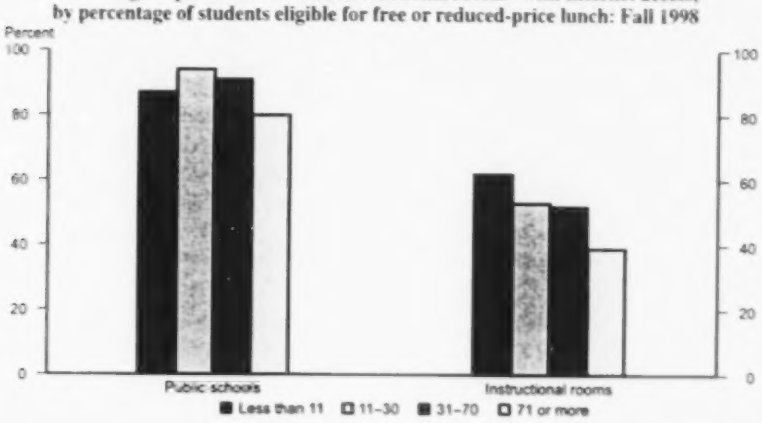
Internet access in public schools

Percentage of public schools and instructional rooms* with Internet access: Fall 1994–98



Percentage of public schools and instructional rooms* with Internet access, by percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch: Fall 1998



* Based on the total number of instructional rooms in regular public schools.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, "Internet Access in Public Schools," Issue Brief, February 1998, and "Internet Access in Public Schools, 1994–1998," Issue Brief, February 1999.

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